

Message Text

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50

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00

USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /066 W

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O 051415Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6360

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY LOURENCO MARQUES

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 0306

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, BC, RH

SUBJECT: BOTSWANA'S REACTION TO ARREST OF RHODESIAN ANC
LEADER SITHOLE

1. GOB ISSUED FOLLOWING OFFICIAL STATEMENT ON SMITH REGIME
ARREST OF RHODESIAN ANC LEADER SITHOLE:

QUOTE. THE NEWS OF THE ARREST AND THE PROPOSED SECRET TRIAL
OF THE REV. NDABANINGI SITHOLE BY THE SMITH REGIME CAME AS
A SHOCK TO US. WE TOTALLY DISAPPROVE OF ANY SUCH ACTION
AGAINST A LEADING MEMBER OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE AS IT IS BOUND TO CAUSE DIVISIONS WITHIN THE ANC
AND RETARD PROGRESS TOWARDS A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT TO THE
RHODESIA PROBLEM. END QUOTE.

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2. COMMENT: GOB STATEMENT IS RATHER CAUTIOUS AND REFLECTS

VIEW THAT SITHOLE MAY WELL HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN A CONSPIRACY
TO ASSASSINATE ZAPU LEADER NKOMO. GOB OFFICIALS FEEL
THAT SMITH MOVE IN ARRESTING SITHOLE WILL INDEED TEND TO
DIVIDE ANC AND MAKE CEASEFIRE EVEN MORE DIFFICULT TO
ACHIEVE AND THUS FORESTALL WITHDRAWAL OF SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE
FROM RHODESIA. IN ANY CASE OFFICIALS HERE FEEL THAT SMITH
HAS DEALT A BIG SET-BACK TO EFFORTS RESOLVE RHODESIA CONSTI-
TUTIONAL DISPUTE BY ARRESTING SITHOLE. I WOULD EXPECT AN
EARLY MEETING OF ANC, BOTSWANA, ZAMBIAN, TANZANIAN,
AND POSSIBLE SOUTH AFRICAN, OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS LATEST
DEVELOPMENTS.
BOLEN

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NNN

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